



# The Summer of '45: Stories and Voices from VE Day to VJ Day

*Kevin Telfer*

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On 8 May 1945 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill finally announced to waiting crowds that the Allies had accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and that the war in Europe was over. For the next two days, people around the world celebrated. But the “slow outbreak of peace” that gradually dawned across the world in the summer of 1945 was fraught with difficulties and violence.

Beginning with the signing of the German surrender to the Western Allies in Reims on 7 May, *The Summer of '45* is a 'people's history' which gathers voices from all levels of society and from all corners of the globe to explore four months that would dictate the order of the world for decades to come.

Quoting from generals, world statesmen, infantrymen, prisoners of war, journalists, civilians and neutral onlookers, this book presents the memories of the men and women who danced alongside Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret outside Buckingham Palace on the first night of peace; the reactions of the vanquished and those faced with rebuilding a shattered Europe; the often overlooked story of the 'forgotten army' still battling against the Japanese in the East; the election of Clement Attlee's reforming Labour government; the beginnings of what would become the Iron Curtain; and testimony from the first victims of nuclear warfare in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Combining archive sources and original interviews with living witnesses, *The Summer of '45* reveals the lingering trauma of the war and the new challenges brought by peacetime.

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